



Book	School Board Policies
Section	H - Community Relations
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## **H225**

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS, CONCERNS, AND PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS**

Public comment about Northwest Allen County Schools is welcomed by the School Board whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program. Any person or group having an interest in the operation of the Corporation shall have the right to present a request, suggestion, comment, or concern relating to personnel, the programs, or the operations of the Corporation.

Comments and concerns related to curriculum, methods of instruction, instructional materials, or Corporation employees shall be submitted in writing to the principal of the school and the Superintendent. Comments and concerns thus submitted will be considered by the Superintendent or his or her designated assistants and the principal. At the discretion of the Superintendent, a committee may be appointed, an existing committee may be utilized, or other action may be taken to review the matter in question and submit a written decision to the Superintendent.

Public participation shall not include business or academic concerns particular to an individual or concerning a particular school. If the concern has been shared through the normal chain of command and/or appropriate appeal procedures have been exhausted through prior discussions with the appropriate supervisor and the Superintendent or his/her designee in an attempt to resolve the problem, such items may be submitted in writing to the Board and shall be signed by the person or persons making the charge or complaint.

Subject to the reasonable rules and registration process described below, the Board shall allow members of the public, physically present at a meeting, to provide oral comment before the Board takes final action on a topic. The Board may choose to allow public comment during an electronic meeting held during a declared emergency or local disaster.

At each meeting where public participation is permitted the presiding officer shall review the procedures to be followed by the Board and constituents. The presiding officer shall be guided by the following rules:

- (A) To allow for an efficient meeting, the total amount of time dedicated to public comment shall not exceed thirty (30) minutes, absent a vote of the majority of the Board to extend the time.
- (B) Anyone having a legitimate interest in the actions of the Board may participate during the public portion of a meeting;
- (C) Participants must sign up to speak prior to the scheduled start of the meeting, be recognized by the presiding officer, and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, and residency;
- (D) Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to two (2) minutes duration;
- (E) No participant may speak more than once on the same topic unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard;
- (F) All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no person may address or question Board members individually;

(G) The presiding officer may:

1. prohibit public comments which are frivolous repetitive, or harassing;
2. interrupt, warn, or terminate a person's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant;
3. request any individual to leave the meeting when that person behaves in a manner that is disruptive of the orderly conduct of the meeting;
4. request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting;
5. call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action; and

(H) Tape or video recordings are permitted. The person operating the recorder should contact the Superintendent prior to the Board meeting to review possible placement of the equipment, and the recorder agrees to abide by the following conditions:

1. No obstructions are created between the Board and the audience;
2. No interviews are conducted during the Board meeting; and
3. No commentary is made that would distract either the Board or members of the audience.

The purpose of the public comment is to give the Board members as much information as possible, not to engage in debate. Board members or administrators may provide answers to questions asked during public comment if the information is readily available and not confidential. Often, however, questions will not be answered, but taken under advisement and answers may be returned at a later time.

The Board will not tolerate comments that are: threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, or personal attacks. Nothing in this policy prohibits the Board from taking reasonable steps to maintain order in a meeting, including removal of any person who is willfully disruptive of the meeting.

I.C. 20-26-5-4

20 U.S.C. 1232h